



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

Supervisor David F. Bowen, District 10

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SUPERVISOR DAVID F. BOWEN PRAISES FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR PASSAGE OF LIVING WAGE ORDINANCE

Milwaukee County Supervisor David F. Bowen today praised the County Board's Finance, Personnel and Audit Committee for voting to approve a "living wage" of 100 percent of the poverty line – \$11.33 – for workers employed by companies that do business with the County. The vote was 7-2.

"This was not only a brave thing to do, it was the right thing to do," said Bowen, a member of the Finance Committee. "There was much opposition to a living wage ordinance from the County Executive and others who said an increase in the federal or state minimum wage would be more appropriate. But those increases won't happen.

"That opposition ignores the reality of the situation. As I have said before, the reality is that Gov. Scott Walker and the Republican-controlled Legislature have no interest in passing anything that favors the working poor. A state minimum wage increase will simply not happen."

Bowen praised President Obama's executive order mandating a minimum wage of \$10.10 for private contractors that do business with the federal government, but he said it does not go far enough. He said a higher minimum wage that affects all workers could not pass the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives. The current federal minimum wage is \$7.50.

"We can not wait for state action. We can not wait for federal action. We need County action," Bowen said. "This living wage ordinance will truly benefit those at the bottom of the economic ladder.

"Our proposal was amended by the committee to lower the living wage from 110 percent of the poverty line to 100 percent, but the increase still represents significant progress toward lifting people out of poverty-level jobs and won't affect economic development. This amendment and others will make the proposal more likely to pass with a veto-proof majority when it goes to the full Board on February 6.

"Passage by the Committee of this ordinance while President Obama is visiting the area is a great gesture to his efforts."

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